

A SERMON TO MINISTERS AND OTHER TRIED BELIEVERS

NO. 3273

A SERMON
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“Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”
1 Peter 5:7

THIS season of depression in trade has brought great care to many a house and heart, especially to village pastors and their flocks. Their troubles have been heavy and I am afraid their cares have not been light. Few have escaped the pinch of these hard times—the most prosperous have to watch the ebbing tide and ask—How long shall these things be? The subject will be seasonable to us all.

A very good preface to any sermon is the connection—let us look at the passage before us. The verse preceding it is, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” If we are truly humble, we shall cast our care upon God, and by that process, our joy will be exalted.

We are slow to submit to the hand of God and oftentimes our care is fretful rebellion against our heavenly Father’s will. We determine to carve for ourselves and so we cut our fingers. I saw upon a cart only yesterday the name of a tradesman who calls himself, “Universal Provider”—do we not aspire to some such office? There is a Universal Provider—and if we are humble under His hand we shall leave our matter in His hands. Oh, for more humility, for then shall we have more tranquility. Pride begets anxiety—true humility gives birth to patience.

The verse which follows our text is this—“Be sober, be vigilant’ because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour.” Cast your care upon God, because you need all your powers of thought to battle with the great enemy. He hopes to devour you by care. Cast all your care upon God, for if you are worried you cannot be sober or watchful. Satan rides on the back of carnal care and so obtains entrance into the soul. If he can distract our minds from the peace of faith by temporal cares, he will get an advantage over us.

The preface allowed of expansion, but I have compressed it with stern economy of time. I must condense with equal rigor all through my discourse. We will first *expound the text* and then *enforce it*.

I. First, let us EXPOUND THE TEXT—“Casting all your *care* upon him; for he *careth* for you.”

It is noteworthy that in the Greek, the two words for “care” are different. Hence the Revised Version reads, “Casting all your anxiety upon him, because he careth for you.” The care which you are to cast upon God, is wearing you out, and you are to cast it upon God because, in quite another sense, “he careth for you.”

The word used in reference to God is applied to caring for the poor and in another place to the watchfulness of a shepherd. Our anxiety and God’s care are two very different things. His care, though tender and comprehensive, causes no anxiety to Him, for His great mind is more than equal to the task.

But our care ferments within us and threatens the destruction of our narrow souls. You are to cast your care, which is folly, upon the Lord, for He exercises a care which is wisdom. Care to us is exhausting, but God is all-sufficient. Care to us is sinful, but God’s care of us is holy. Care distracts us from service, but the divine mind does not forget one thing while remembering another.

If our care is to be cast upon God, we are hereby led to make a distinction, for there is a care which we could not dare to cast upon God—it would be blasphemy to attempt it. Anxiety to grow rich—can

we impart that to God? Anxiety to be famous, to live in luxury, to avenge an injury, to magnify myself—can I ask the Most High to bear such an anxiety for me?

If any of you are vexed with such care, I charge you to fling it off, for it is like the poisoned tunic of Hercules, and unless you can tear it away, it will burn into your very soul. All cares of covetousness, anger, pride, ambition, and willfulness must be cast to the winds—it would be criminal to dream of casting them upon God. Do not pray about them, except that God will redeem you from them. Let your desires be kept within a narrow circle and your anxieties will be lessened at a stroke.

“*Casting*,” says the apostle. He does not say “laying all your care upon him,” but he uses a much more energetic word. You have to *cast* the load upon the Lord—the act will require effort. It is no child’s play to cast all our care upon our Lord when there are six little children, shoes worn out, cupboard empty, purse bare, and the deacons talking of reducing the scanty salary. Here is a work worthy of faith.

You will have to lift with all your soul before the burden can be shifted and the anxiety cast upon the Lord. That effort, however, will not be half as exhausting as the effort of carrying your load yourself. Oh, the burden of watching and waiting for help which never comes. Depending on the help of man, who is altogether vanity.

Oh, the weariness of carrying a heartbreaking anxiety and yet standing up to preach! We have all seen statues of Atlas bearing the world on his shoulders, but we can hardly conceive of his preaching in that attitude. It would be better to make one tremendous effort and have done with it, rather than groan under a perpetual weight. If the fox is eating into our heart, let us pluck it from our bosom and kill it at once.

Note, next, the words, “*upon him*.” You may tell your griefs to others to gain their sympathy, for we are bidden to bear one another’s burdens. You may ask friends to help you and so exercise your humility, but let your requests to man be ever in subordination to your waiting upon God. Some have obtained their full share of human help by much begging from their fellow Christians, but it is a nobler thing to make known your requests unto God. And somehow, those who beg only of God are wondrously sustained where others fail.

What a pleasant story is that in which we recount the lovingkindnesses of the Lord and tell how “this poor man cried and the LORD heard him.” Quiet, patient believers have come under my notice who have carried their cross in silence, waiting upon the Lord alone. How they endured their trial, I cannot tell, save that “they endured, as seeing him who is invisible.”

But their necessity became known, it leaked out, they knew not how, and they were helped, and helped better than they would have been if their appeal had been to man. I am condemning no appeal to our fellow believers. Many are willing to help, but they cannot do so if the need is unknown—but do not place anyone in the office and throne of the great God, who alone is the Caretaker and Burden-Bearer of His people.

I am afraid that, sometimes, in our care not to alienate this great man who does so much for the cause, or that excellent lady who takes half-a-dozen sittings in the chapel, we may grieve the Lord and lose our true Helper. Cease, then, from man—cast all your care upon God and upon Him only.

Certain courses of action are the very reverse of casting all your care upon God, and one is *indifference*. Whatever virtue there may be in stoicism, it is unknown to the true child of God. “I don’t care,” may be an appropriate expression for an atheist to use, but it is not suitable for a Christian. It may sound well and the man who utters the defiant words may think himself some great one, but it is an evil utterance for all that.

I am afraid some brethren’s “don’t care,” is very sinful, for they get into debt and don’t care. They break their promises and engagements and don’t care. Brethren, such men ought to care. Every man is bound to care about his life-duties and the claims of his family. He that cares not for his own household is worse than a heathen man. Casting care upon God is the very reverse of recklessness and inconsiderateness.

It is not casting care upon God *when a man does that which is wrong in order to clear himself*. Yet this is too often tried. Under pressure, some men do very unjustifiable things. We ought to be slow to condemn, since we ourselves also may yet be tempted in the same way, and may err in like manner. Still, faith ought to be able to win every battle.

He who compromises truth to avoid pecuniary loss is hewing out a broken cistern for himself. He who borrows when he knows he cannot pay, he who enters into wild speculations to increase his income, he who does aught that is ungodly in order to turn a penny is not casting his care upon God. An act of disobedience is a rejection of God's help, that we may help ourselves. He who does the right thing at all hazards practically casts his care upon the Lord. Acts are with us, but their consequences are with God. Our care should be to please God—and all other care we may safely leave to Him.

How, then, are we to cast all our care upon God? Two things need to be done. It is a heavy load that is to be cast upon God and it requires the hand of prayer and the hand of faith to make the transfer. Prayer tells God what the care is and asks God to help, while faith believes that God can and will do it. Prayer spreads the letter of trouble and grief before the Lord and opens all its budget, and then faith cries, "I believe that God cares, and cares for me. I believe that He will bring me out of my distress and make it promote His own glory."

When you have thus lifted your care into its true position and cast it upon God, take heed that you do not pick it up again. Many a time have I gone to God and have relieved my care by believing prayer—but I am ashamed to confess that after a little time, I have found myself burdened again with those very anxieties which I thought I had given up. Is it wise to put our feet into fetters which have once been broken off?

My brethren, there is a more excellent way—a way which I have tried and proved. I have at times been perplexed with difficulties. I have tried my best with them and I have utterly failed. And then I have gone with the perplexity to the throne of God and placed the whole case in the Lord's hands, solemnly resolving never to trouble myself about the aforesaid matters any more, whatever might happen.

I was quite incapable of further action in the matter and so I washed my hands of the whole concern and left it with God. Some of these cares I have never seen again—they melted like hoar frost in the morning sun—and in their place I have found a blessing lying on the ground. Other troubles have remained in fact but not in effect, for I have consented to the yoke and it has never galled my shoulder again.

Brethren, let the dead bury their dead and let us follow Jesus. Henceforth let us leave worldlings to fret and fume over the cares of this life—as for us, let our conversation be in heaven, and let us carefully abstain from carelessness, being anxious only to end anxiety by a childlike confidence in God.

II. Accept this little contribution towards an exposition and let us now proceed to ENFORCE THE TEXT. I will give you certain *reasons* and then *the reason* why you should cast all your care upon God.

First, *the ever-blessed One commands you to do it*. We need no other reason. The precept is akin to the Gospel command "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." It is a blessed privilege and it is also a command. He who bids us cease from idolatry, also bids us cease from care. The law of Sabbath-keeping is not more divine than that of resting in the Lord.

He whom we call Master and Lord bids us take no anxious thought—His bidding has all the authority of law. Say to yourself, my anxious brother, "I may roll my burden upon the Lord, for He bids me do so." If you do not trust in God, you will be distinctly sinful—you are as much commanded to trust as to love.

Next, cast all your cares on God *because you will have matters enough to think of even then*. There are sacred cares which the Lord will lay upon you, because you have cast your care upon Him. When He has broken your painful yoke, you will have His easy yoke to bear. There is the care to love and serve Him better, the care to understand His Word, the care to preach it to His people, the care to experience

His fellowship, the care so to walk that you shall not vex the Holy Spirit. Such hallowed cares will always be with you and will increase as you grow in grace.

In a sense, we may cast even these upon God, looking for His Holy Spirit to help us, for it is He that works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure—yet not without our care and zeal does He operate upon us—and this is one reason why you are not to allow lower ends and designs to inundate your mind. Your spirit has another vineyard to keep, another capital to put out to interest, another Master to please, and it cannot afford to yield its thought to meaner pursuits.

Ministers are shepherds and must care for the sheep. “The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep.” But you have the care of churches laid upon you daily, and it is peculiarly needful that you should not be occupied with carnal care.

And next, you must cast your care upon God, *because you have God’s business to do*. It is a dangerous thing for a merchant to employ a man who has a business of his own, because sooner or later the master’s business will suffer, or else the man’s own concern will die out. “No man that warreth,” says Paul, “entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

There is sure to be a clashing of interests when a brother goes into business, unless he does it as Paul did—that he may not be chargeable to the church—for then he attains to double honor. Paul carried his needle and thread with him wherever he went, for everybody had a tent in those days, and he was ready for work at any moment either upon small family tents or tents to cover a great assembly. When he had finished preaching, he could turn to tent-mending, and so earn his own living and preach the Gospel freely.

Paul did not make his preaching a stalking-horse to his trade, but he made his handicraft a packhorse to his ministry, so that he could say, “These hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.” That is a very different thing from a minister deserting his charge to make a larger income by some other calling. The less we have to do with other business the better, for all our care is needed by the church.

Queen Elizabeth bade a notable merchant in the City of London go to the Continent on royal business. “Please, your Majesty,” said he, “who will attend to my business while I am away?” The queen replied, ‘If you will go abroad and see to my business, I will see to your business.’ I will be bound to say that it would not suffer if such a queen took it in hand.

Just so the Lord says to us, “You attend to My work and I will take care of you and your wife and children.” The Lord pledges Himself to do it—bread shall be given us, our water shall be sure. The testimony of many among you will bear me out in this. I come of a line of preachers and though some of them have had to endure straitened circumstances, yet none of them were forsaken, nor have their seed been seen begging bread. The Lord has cared for us and we have lacked nothing.

You ought to do it not only for this reason, but because *it is such a great privilege to be able to cast your care upon God*. If I am plunged in a lawsuit, and some eminent law officer would offer to undertake it all, out of love to me, how glad I should be! I should worry no longer, I should say to all who troubled me on the matter, “You must go to my solicitor. I know nothing about the matter.”

Do this to your cunning enemy, the devil, who is always glad to see you anxious and fretful. Let us say to him, “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee.” What a file that is for the old viper to break his teeth upon! *Chosen!* CHOSEN! And if chosen, shall we not be cared for?

Let me add, that you ministers ought to cast all your care upon God, *because it will be such a good example for your hearers*. Our people learn much from our conduct. And if they see us fretting, they will be certain to do the same. You preach faith, do you not? How sad it will be for you to be convicted of unbelief! Our own words may condemn us if we are anxious.

Once when I was unduly depressed, my good wife said to me, “I have a book here which I should like to read to you.” It did me good to hear her read, but I felt myself rebuked by every word. I half

suspected what was coming when she said, “That is your own, recollect?” She had been giving the doctor some of his own medicine.

What a many things you have said, my brethren, that will condemn you if you do not trust God! Is it, after all, mere talk? Did you mean what you said and is it true? Or have you merely been repeating official dogmas in which you have no personal confidence? Is the providence of God a myth or a living, bright reality?

“Here,” said a quack in the market, “is a medicine that will cure coughs, colds, consumptions [the fellow coughed horribly at this point]. It is of such efficacy that it would almost restore the dead. [Here he coughed again.] Nobody need remain a sufferer—he has only to buy a box of the pills” [here the quack’s own cough prevented him from speaking.]

Ah! laugh on, laugh on, brethren, only mind that nobody laughs at you for doubting while you extol faith. We must show in ourselves that faith in our God is a healing medicine, or men will not believe us. We shall make Christ Himself seem to be a pretender, unless we practically prove that we have been healed by Him. Let your people see in you what comes of trusting Christ. Let them see what cheerfulness, what hopefulness, what buoyancy of heart, come to those who trust Christ and cast all their care upon Him.

But the reason of reasons is that contained in our text, “*He careth for you.*” After all, what a small matter it must be to God to care for us, since He provides for the commissariat of the universe, the feeding of the cattle on a thousand hills, and the wild beasts of the plains. Think of those myriads of fish, those armies of birds, those enormous multitudes of insects! What a God must He be who cares for all!

Compared with the demands of all these, our little wants are soon supplied. We want but little and that little is scarcely a crumb from the table of the Lord our God. Surely if God says, “I will care for you,” we need not give another thought except to sing, “The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.”

It does not need two of us for this small matter, and certainly not two when one is infinite in wisdom and power. Even if we were wise, the Lord would not need our help. With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, when He created the earth, piled the mountains, and spanned the sky? Let us, therefore, stand still and see the salvation of God.

The Lord thinks about us, plans for us, arranges for us, studies to make things right for us—these are poor words with which to describe His care, for He does more than that—He loves us. That great, boundless, mighty heart loves us. This is fit matter for a heavenly song! Because He has set His love upon us, we can surely cast our care upon Him.

He has given us Christ—will He not give us bread? See, He has called us to be His sons—will He starve His children? See what He is preparing for us in heaven—will He not enable us to bear the burdens of this present life? We dishonor God when we suspect His tenderness and generosity. We can only magnify Him by a calm faith which leans upon His Word.

There, dear brothers, there is my word from the Master for you. I should like to have hammered out that little grain of gold so that you might have gilded your lives with it, but please do it for yourselves. Now will you carry your cares away, or will you bow your heads in silent prayer and throw them all off? Holy Spirit, the Comforter, lighten our darkness, we beseech You!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

2 TIMOTHY 1 AND 2:1-13

Chapter 1. Verses 1-2. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, to Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*

I would again remind you, as I have often done before, that the apostle Paul, when he is writing to a minister, invariably begins his epistle with the triple greeting, “Grace, mercy, and peace,” but when he is

writing to a church, he commences with the double benediction, “Grace and peace.” You will find that this is his wish for the Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, “Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” This is also his form of greeting to Philemon, who was a private Christian, not a minister.

But when the apostle is writing to Timothy and Titus, his own sons in the faith, and his fellow ministers of the Gospel, he says, “Grace, *mercy*, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.” It seems as though, guided by the Holy Spirit, he thought that the office of the Christian ministry is of so weighty and responsible a character that the man who rightly fills that honorable position not only needs the grace and peace that are necessary for all believers, but that he must in addition have a special supply of mercy. And truly, no one needs mercy more than the preacher of mercy.

Note, too, that the “grace, mercy, and peace” are to come “from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.” Father and Son are united in the gracious act of bestowing “grace, mercy, and peace.” The Father is the great eternal fountain of all these blessings, but the Son is the divinely-appointed channel through whom they flow down to us.

3. *I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;*

Thank God that Paul had such a sympathetic spirit and that Timothy’s needs so continually rose before his supplicating eye—and that Paul was able to pray for Timothy, not with anxiety, not in doubtfulness—but with thankfulness. Oh, that all young Christians might be such consistent Christians that those who have brought them to Christ might always be able to pray for them with thankfulness!

4. *Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy;*

I suppose that Timothy was very tender-hearted and that he had been grieved because of Paul’s many afflictions. And on his part, the apostle greatly missed his dearly-beloved son in the faith. In the latter part of this epistle, Paul writes, “Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” And again, “Do thy diligence to come before winter.” Looking forward to his impending martyrdom, Paul longed for the companionship of the one who was so specially dear to him.

5. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.*

Grace does not run in the blood, but it often runs side by side with it. The “grandmother Lois” and the “mother Eunice” had the true grace of saving faith dwelling in them, and Paul was persuaded that it dwelt in the son and grandson Timothy.

6. *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance—*

Paul had been speaking of his own remembrance of Timothy, and of Timothy’s faith, and now he says, “Wherefore I put thee in remembrance—”

6. *That thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.* [See sermon #1080, Our Gifts and How to Use Them]

The best of fires need stirring sometimes and the best gift of God, even the sacred fire of the Holy Spirit, may sometimes burn low in the heart so that we have need to stir up the gift of God that is within us. There are some brethren, also, who have more God-given gifts within them than they know of. They have never searched for them, so they allow them to lie hidden away unobserved and useless. We have need to stir up our gifts as well as our graces and to use to God’s glory all the powers with which He has entrusted us.

7. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.*

What a boon this is to all who can truly say with Paul, “God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”

8. *Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,—*

There is need to say this today, for many are becoming “ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,” that old-fashioned Gospel which Paul received by direct revelation from his Lord, and for which he laid

down his life. It is fashionable nowadays to put on the furbelows of modern philosophy rather than to be robed in the snow-white garment of truth. Paul says to Timothy, “Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord”—

8-9. *Nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel according to the power of God; who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.*

Salvation comes first, and calling afterwards—at least, so it is in the great plan of redemption. We are saved by the death of Christ before we are effectually called by His grace. The great work of our salvation was wrought for us on Calvary, and now we are made to know and to partake of that salvation by the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Gospel.

9. *Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.* [See sermon #703, Salvation Altogether By Grace]

What a blessed doctrine this is! Some people cannot endure even to hear or read of it, but it is full of comfort and joy for the Spirit-taught people of God. God’s grace was “given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,”

10-11. *But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel: whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.*

How Paul gloried in this triple divine appointment! He commenced this epistle by writing, “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,” and here he says of the Gospel, “whereunto I am appointed a preacher.” I see that some tradesmen put up a notice over their shops stating that they are so-and-so “by appointment to Her Majesty,” but Paul had the highest honor under heaven in being “appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

12. *For which cause I also suffer these things:*

And I expect that his eyes glanced round on the walls of his dungeon, and that he rattled the chains that bound his hands to those of the soldiers who had him in their charge.

12-15. *Nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us. This thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes.*

Probably these were leaders who ought to have acted differently and to have stuck by the apostle. But when he was in prison and likely to be put to death by Nero, many who had been his former companions forsook him and were ashamed to own him—for which we also are ashamed of them. It is the same, now—if the servant of God shall fall into the disfavor of the great ones of the earth, many will be ashamed of him.

Paul mentions these who turned away from him, for their unfaithfulness evidently grieved him sorely. But he also mentions another case of quite a different sort—

16-17. *The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain: but when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.*

He did not know exactly where the apostle was—in which prison he was confined—but he went from place to place until at last he lighted upon him, and then he was not ashamed to be seen ministering to the poor chained prisoner.

We read of various corporations spending a great deal of money in buying chains of office for their mayors, but this chain, worn by the apostle in his prison cell at Rome, was far more valuable than any of them. What an eternal honor it will be to him, and how sad it is that anyone should have been ashamed of his fetters when he was so bravely suffering for Christ’s sake! There was more value in those chains on Paul’s wrists than in all the chains that were ever worn on the necks of the great ones of this world.

18. *The Lord grant unto him, that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day:*

He came to Paul and talked with him, and probably sang with him, and prayed with him, I have no doubt. He often refreshed the apostle in Rome. And then Paul added—

18. *And in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well.* This happy Onesiphorus was a true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, who loved to minister to the apostle when he was in suffering and sorrow.

2 Timothy 2:1-13

Verses 1-2. *Thou, therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*

This is the true apostolic succession—one minister brings another to Christ and then charges that other to train other preachers and teachers to carry on the blessed work of evangelization.

3-4. *Thou, therefore, endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.*

The man who has given himself wholly to the service of Christ must not undertake any other business that would prevent his giving his whole strength to his Master's work.

5-8. *And if a man also strives for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully. The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits. Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel:* [See Sermon #1653, The Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus]

The resurrection of Christ is the cornerstone of the glorious temple of truth, the keystone of the arch of revelation. Paul tells us, in that great chapter, 1 Corinthians 15, how hopeless our case would be if Christ was not “raised from the dead.” But he also proves most conclusively that he was raised “the third day, according to the Scriptures.”

9. *Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.* [See sermons #1998, Not Bound Yet]

Thank God that it is not yet bound though many have tried to fetter it. When they think that they have manacled it, it breaks loose again, and so it always will. However low this heavenly fire may burn, it soon blazes up again and so it shall to the world's end. Immortal as the Christ who is the sum and substance of it is the everlasting Gospel of the blessed God.

10-13. *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying: For if we are dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.* [See sermon #1453, Eternal Faithfulness Unaffected By Human Unbelief]

Blessed truth, God grant us the grace to meditate upon it until we also shall become faithful to Him and to His truth!

N.B.—Last week's sermon, #3271, “God, the Children's Teacher,” was one of the very few preached by Mr. Spurgeon to an audience of children and young people. They must have been very attentive, for the discourse was a very long one. In fact, it was so long that the following paragraphs were crowded out of last week's issue, but they are too good to be lost, especially as space is available for them here:

A gentleman bought a pear tree and planted it in his garden. The first year it did not have any pears on it, but the second year there was a good show of bloom and after a while there was one little pear. So the gentleman said to his wife, “Now we shall know whether that really is as good a pear tree as the gardener told me it would be.”

To his children he said, “Now, mind, none of you touch that pear, for I am very particular to know about it—to see whether it is worthwhile to keep the tree.” One of his little boys was very fond of pears, and he watched that pear and saw it grow. It kept on growing and his father said to him, “Now, John, I know you will not touch that pear. You may have any of the other fruit in the garden, but you must not touch that pear.” John said, “No, Father.”

Yet, somehow, as that pear began to swell and get ripe, his mouth watered after that particular pear and he thought, “Oh, I should like to eat it!” He passed close by it sometimes, but he did not touch it. At last, one night, a beautiful, bright, moonlight night, as he lay in bed, he looked out of the window and he could see the pear tree down in the garden, and he thought, “Father won’t know I took the pear—he’ll never think I should go out at night. I’ll put on my slippers—it’s a nice moonlight night—and I’ll slip down and get that pear.”

He went downstairs, though he hardly liked being out alone at night, and opening the back door, he went out into the garden, and stood underneath the tree, and was getting on his tiptoe to reach the pear, when, between the leaves, a ray of light came right straight into his eyes. It was the gleam of a star and that star seemed to be watching him, and that ray of light, coming through the leaves from that particular star, at the same moment his heart seemed to say these four words, which he said were the best words he ever heard, for they were, all his life long, a blessing to him—“Thou, God, seest me.”

Down he went on to his feet, no more on his tiptoe, glided upstairs, took off his slippers, and went to bed, so thankful to think that the star had looked at him and saved him from doing wrong. It seemed to be like God’s light looking right through the tree and the text seemed to be God’s Word, reminding him how wrongly he was acting.

Now, he who goes to God’s school, and has learnt to live as in God’s sight, has learnt one of the best lessons that ever could be taught him. I hope that none of us here, whether men, or women, or boys, or girls, will ever be satisfied till, in everything, we act as in God’s sight. Nobody would cheat in the shops then, nobody would tell a lie then, if they always knew that God was looking upon them.

* * *

One other thing and I will finish. I think some dear boys and girls ought to be very earnest just now, and ask the Lord to take them into His school, because *there are many who are very anxious about them*. There was once a boy of the name of Stoddart, and he was a very bad boy, or rather, he was a very bad young man.

One night, his pastor met him outside a little chapel, into which several people were going. The young man said, in a joking, saucy, naughty tone, “What are you at?” and the minister, who was an old, staid man, turned round and said, “Young man, this is what we are at—your mother asked us to meet tonight and pray for you.”

Young Stoddart walked away and said, “Then, if these people are praying about me, it’s high time I should pray for myself,” and before the meeting was over, in he crept and you cannot tell the joy there was when he came in to say he thanked them for praying for him, and desired to pray for himself. He became a famous preacher in America and brought many souls to Christ—and was the man who preached a sermon at the chapel where afterwards Jonathan Edwards became a minister of Christ, and was the means of a great revival of religion.

Now we are praying for you. And John, and Mary, and William, and James, I want you to say, as this young man did, “Then it is high time we should pray for ourselves.” God bless every one of you, and bless you tonight, for Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.